

**Skateboard Advisory Committee**  
**February 29, 2016**  
**Parks & Recreation Office**

**Skateboard Advisory Committee Members Present:** Thomas Bubier, Michael Cannon, James Duane, Betty Funk, Kathy Hauck, Robert McArthur, Joan Rastani, Jason Smith, Cheryl Tully Stoll

**Others:** Mary Ellen Kelley, Thomas Begin, and James Snyder - Please see attached sign-in sheet;

**Members Absent:** Robert McArthur, and James McCarthy

Chairman Jason Smith called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm and read the agenda into record.

Chairman Smith announced the Committee would be taking agenda item 7 (*Update on Grant Identification and Application Progress*) as the first item as Mary Ellen Kelley, CFO, was in attendance.

Committee Member James Duane discussed potential grants that have been previously discussed and could be utilized for this project. The first grant Mr. Duane discussed was the Partnerships Matching Funds Program offered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). He explained that this project would not be eligible for funding through this program as it is focused on awarding funds for projects that improve properties under DCR control only. The second grant he discussed was the Tony Hawk grant. Mr. Duane had previous conversations with representatives from the Tony Hawk Grant while attending a Parks & Recreation Conference. He explained it is a very competitive grant but the representatives encouraged the Town to submit an application once the award cycle opens. In addition, Mr. Duane discussed the Parkland Acquisitions Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant. While the next round of funding has not been announced just yet, it is the intent of the Parks Division to submit a grant packet for this reimbursable grant. The PARC grant awards a reimbursable grant to selected communities for up to 64% of total funds expended on the project, up to \$400,000. Using the percentage Framingham is eligible to receive (64% as of this year's grant awards), the Town could be awarded \$254,000 for this project.

Ms. Kelley discussed the steps her office takes in building the Town-wide Capital Budget beginning in September and focused on where the planned skate park will fit in these plans. The Town views the skate park as a commitment to having a budget authorization included in this year's capital budget, which has been included in their Capital Budget recommendations. She further explained that every year, her office must pick and identify the best projects that can move forward and every year, there are projects submitted that are deferred. She estimated that roughly 37% of requests are deferred annually. She explained the Town has targeted this project to cost \$400,000 and used that number in spending plans for the Town-wide Operating and Capital Budget. Ms. Kelley also discussed the prior PARC grants that have been awarded to the Parks Division, explaining that the appropriation at past Town meetings have been contingent on successful awarding of this grant. However, for this project she is not recommending the Town do this. When the Town receives its reimbursement from the PARC grant for this project, she indicated the intent is to hold those funds in a separate account that will then be available for expenditure on a future additional skate park. Mr. Duane explained that in past PARC Grant applications, the Parks Department has asked that funds grants by Town Meeting be contingent upon receiving funding from the PARC Grant. In this instance, it is the intent to ask for the full amount regardless of PARC grant funding. This will ensure the construction of Framingham's first skate park

occurs and is not contingent upon grant funding. In addition, if the Parks Department is successful in their application for a PARC Grant, those funds will go to offset the cost of the borrowed amount, and could also be held to offset the cost of future construction of a second skate park. Mr. Smith asked if they were to receive a PARC Grant, could it be used to spend beyond the anticipated appropriation of \$400,000 to add additional amenities to the site. Mr. Duane explained they could do both but a challenge would be in adding additional amenities to a skate park that has a completed design. This completed design is submitted to the State for their review and consideration when deciding on what grants will receive PARC funding. If the Town then turns around and decides to make the park bigger, it will slow down construction, require additional design, and requires additional review/approval, which could potentially put PARC funding at risk if it is not accepted by the State. In past successful PARC Grant application, this type of method has not been used as it leaves any award subject to the possibility of being rescinded based on additions/modifications to the park. The other thing that could occur with the reimbursement funds is using them to purchase park benches, shade structures, and like items. Committee Member Betty Funk asked Ms. Kelley if there is another complexity to this situation in regards to the possibility that the Town will be bringing two budgeting options to Town Meeting in the form of a 1.25% and 1.75% tax levy increase, and second that the SAC has already come to an agreement on a requested appropriation that has been agreed upon by the CFO and Town Manager and recommended to be brought forward to Town Meeting and now if the SAC comes back and asks for more money, will it put the project at risk of losing the funding altogether? Ms. Kelley explained that the Town will be proposing two separate operating budgets, one that will be \$880,000 less than what they will term the Administration's recommend budget, which also recommends a 1.75% levy increase. She explained that if the skate park construction request was changed to a higher number, something would have to be cut out of both budgets, made worse by the fact that in the lower budget there are already a number of things being cut in order to remain at the 1.25% levy.

Ms. Heather Bachman, resident, asked if there was a possibility for the addition of amenities to the final selected skate park footprint if it allows for it, or if the intent is to keep any additional funding beyond what the park will cost for a future skate park. Chairman Smith explained that there seems to be additional funding that will be granted for the skate park from CDBG in the amount of \$30,000 that could be used to offset the cost of amenities within the skate park.

Ms. Judy Grove, Town Meeting Member, explained she was happy with the CFO stating they were recommending funding for this project in the amount of \$400,000. She also discussed a document that she circulated to the SAC (Framingham, MA – Skate park Size Calculator) that identifies a recommended square footage for a skate park in a community this size. Committee Member Michael Cannon discussed the document pointing out that the document provided utilizes information and calculations issued by a private firm that specializes in the construction of skate parks. He also discussed some research he conducted on his own that found that the need for skate parks and the number of skaters nationwide is on the decline. In addition, the square footage in which Ms. Grove is recommending and the expense that will go along with it is not something that will fit within the Town's Capital Budget and could jeopardize potential funding for a park.

Chairman Smith reminded everyone that the Committee has chosen to move forward with the dollar amount and selected site that has been submitted for Town Meeting review/approval. If Mary

Dennison Park was available for development at this time, the project would be a different scope and size. However, it is the idea that this park could be the first and a second park could be located at Mary Dennison when the time comes.

Mr. Duane explained that although he can appreciate the fact that there may be a requirement based on numbers wherever they come from, to reach a certain threshold, if you think of the number of ball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts in Town, they are not all in the same area and sized to fit all players who would use one of these amenities. These are located throughout Town to accommodate as many people as possible without overcrowding them in order to ensure safety and availability for all to enjoy. He discussed the progress the Committee has made to date, including designer selection, site identification, size discussions, budget identification, submission, and public outreach. In addition, Town Staff is preparing grants for additional funding to offset project costs. He believes this project is 9/10 of the way through the process and has a large amount of momentum heading into a Town Meeting that is prepped and receptive for this project, and does not want to lose this momentum and support by making changes this late in the process. He would like the Committee to focus on gaining funding for this project and then see the park get built and become a hugely successful amenity within Town that would drive the need for an additional park.

Committee Member Cheryl Tully Stoll discussed the potential size of a skate park and features located within it. She believed that the Committee should discuss the placement of features within the park be placed in a manner that would reduce and eliminate safety concerns of users running into each other with the designer along the process. She would like Committee Member James McCarthy, who is a skater, to be part of those discussions as he has firsthand knowledge and experience with these issues.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- **January 7, 2016**

***Committee Member Betty Funk moved to approve the minutes of January 7, 2016; Committee Member Kathy Hauck seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 for said motion;***

- **January 21, 2016**

***Committee Member Joan Rastani moved to approve the minutes of January 21, 2016; Committee Member Kathy Hauck seconded the motion; the Committee voted 7-0-1 (Ms. Funk abstained) for said motion;***

#### **Site Survey and Weather Impacts**

Mr. Duane reviewed the progress of geotechnical testing completed at Farm Pond for both the North and South areas. He explained the consultant had confirmed that the site is suitable for building a skate park due to the test results they received. The site survey was originally delayed due to weather issues, but has recently been completed and sent to the designer, along with aerial photos and geotechnical studies. Recently, the designer submitted two conceptual renderings of what a skate park could look

like at the proposed site. These renderings are a collection of feedback the designer received during the Public Design Workshop as well as conversations with the Committee. He explained that these renderings are rough drafts and something for the Committee to look at. Mr. Duane discussed both conceptual designs. He expressed some concerns with the first concept as it was less than overwhelming and did not incorporate greenspace into the design. He further explained that Pillar Design came back with a second conceptual rendering that was a little more appealing. However, he explained to the Committee that both are very much still concepts and cautioned that the Committee not become married to either design.

Ms. Bachman, explained that she showed the two concepts to her son, who is a young skater, and he preferred the first concept. He believed that this rendering looked like a skate park. Ms. Tully Stoll explained that when looking at concept A, she noticed it had more rails and stairs and asked Mr. Jayden Bachman, skater from the community, if those amenities were what skaters looked for. Mr. Bachman explained those types of amenities were what skaters typically looked for and further explained that the second design didn't look appealing as it was too confined and did not offer that many amenities when compared to the first design. Mr. George Lewis, Town Meeting Member, handed out a rendering (*Suggested elements for a Framingham Skatepark at Farm Pond*) that he completed for the Committee to consider along the process.

#### **Historical Commission Review**

Mr. Duane explained it has been brought to his attention by various people including the Historical Commission, Mr. Fred Wallace, Town Historian, and Park Commission, regarding Farm Pond South. It was explained to him that this site was once an Indian settling ground and has potential historical significance. It was also explained to him that any project that is built at this site that receives State or Federal Funds will be required to receive Massachusetts Historical Society review. With potential grants being issued for this park from CDBG (Federal) and PARC (State), review of this site will be needed.

***Committee Member Michael Cannon moved that the Committee continue moving the project forward while Committee Member James Duane progresses with Massachusetts Historical Society review and approval; Committee Member Cheryl Tully Stoll seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 for said motion.***

#### **NATURAL HERITAGE APPLICATION PROGRESS UPDATE**

Mr. Duane explained he has spoken with Mr. Robert McArthur, Conservation Administrator and Committee Member, and read an email exchange with Mr. McArthur into record.

#### **PROJECT PRESENTATION TO VARIOUS TOWN MEETING COMMITTEES**

Chairman Smith explained he will work with Ms. Kelley on creating a financial breakdown for presentation to Town Committees. Mr. Duane explained there are two ways the Committee can approach these presentations. In the beginning, it was the Committees beliefs that there would be a full design to present to the Committees, but they are not at that point. He feels they have done a phenomenal amount of work and should move forward with presentations to Town Meeting, highlighting their accomplishments. A presentation could include the two conceptual renderings; anticipated budget breakdown; site studies; and Committee report that will officially ask Town Meeting to fund the final design and construction of a skate park. Mr. Smith explained this is his preference in moving forward as it will avoid any delays in the process and ensure the project receives potential funding at this Town Meeting. Mr. James Snyder, Interim Parks & Recreation Director, explained the Parks Department is scheduled to present to the Standing Committee on Capital Budget on March 15<sup>th</sup> and will present this project within their Capital Budget presentation. Mr. Cannon explained he has received a number of questions regarding whether or not this project should go forward. He recommended the Committee be ready to answer questions that are pitting the project against larger needs within the community, specifically funding for schools. Ms. Funk explained it is in the Committees best interest to present Town Meeting and its Committees with a very thorough presentation as this project and request will be held to the same standards as all Town Department projects. She also felt that this project must not be proposed at a higher dollar amount than what has previously been identified.

Chairman Smith discussed putting a working group together for creating a presentation to Town Meeting. Mr. Duane asked how the Committee wants to progress in terms of who would be the person giving these presentations to various Town Committee's. The Committee held a discussion and agreed it would be best for Mr. Snyder to give the presentation to the various Committees' and Town Meeting.

Ms. Grove explained the Planning Board would like to have this project go before them so they can take an official vote of support.

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Snyder to set up a date and time to go in front of the Planning Board to give a presentation asking for their support.

***Committee Member James Duane moved that the Committee propose to Town Meeting and present to the various Standing Committees a project that uses \$400,000 as its requested amount for final design and construction; Committee Member Cheryl Tully Stoll seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 for said motion;***

#### **Next Public Input Meeting**

Mr. Duane explained there are a lot of moving parts in this process. Specifically, how the Town moves forward with the PARC Grant will have a lot to do with how they proceed. He broke down the schedule for a funding award from the State, explaining that it will delay construction progress until after a contract is signed, which at the earliest would be in 2017. However, if the Committee decides to begin construction before this period, any funds expended prior to receiving the contract with the State are not reimbursable. Therefore, a theoretical schedule for this project would be as follows: funds will be available beginning July 1; final design could be finish by August-September 2016, with construction

breaking ground in October-November. These months are suspect for weather and could very well end up not being conducive for construction. If the Committee decides to wait for the awarding of the PARC grant, another public design workshop can be scheduled through October/November, allowing for more public input and review. Chairman Smith also explained if the Committee waited until receiving a PARC grant award, the project would not break ground until May 2017 due to ground conditions and the fact that the grant would not kick in until January of 2017. However, if they didn't wait until a PARC award, they could break ground in September/October, weather dependent. Mr. Duane explained that regardless of whether or not the Committee is waiting for a PARC award before proceeding, the Committee will still need to follow the same process in terms of preparing for Town Meeting presentations. Ms. Grove discussed her previous conversations with Representative Chris Walsh and Representative Tom Sannicandro in regards to supporting a PARC grant application for this project. She further discussed her efforts in soliciting grant funding from other sources and her conversations with State officials on this project. Mr. Duane explained the Committee has been charged with a task from Town Meeting and it seems that efforts are being spilt by people outside of this Committee. He also explained that there might be people in the audience that have ideas on how to drive people to the website and Facebook page and how to get more youth involved in the process, and that could be helpful. He encouraged those people to reach out to the SAC and share their ideas.

Ms. Hauck discussed the previous public design workshop and how it was held during a time of year that college students were not in session at Framingham State. She stated it would be more helpful for attendance to have it during a date/time in which everyone could potentially attend.

***Committee Member Cheryl Tully Stoll moved that the Committee commit to filing a PARC Grant and adjusting the subsequent final design and construction schedule to be aligned with the PARC Grant schedule; and further, to maximize the potential reimbursement without jeopardizing moving the project forward; Committee Member Michael Cannon seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 for said motion.***

***Committee Member Betty Funk moved to adjourn at 8:50 am; Committee Member Joan Rastani seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 for said motion;***

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Begin

The following documents were distributed to each of the SAC members during the meeting and are available at the Park & Recreation Administration Offices:

1. *Suggested elements for a Framingham Skatepark at Farm Pond*, G. Lewis, 2-29-2016
2. *Framingham, MA – Skatepark Size Calculator*, J. Grove, 2-29-2016